

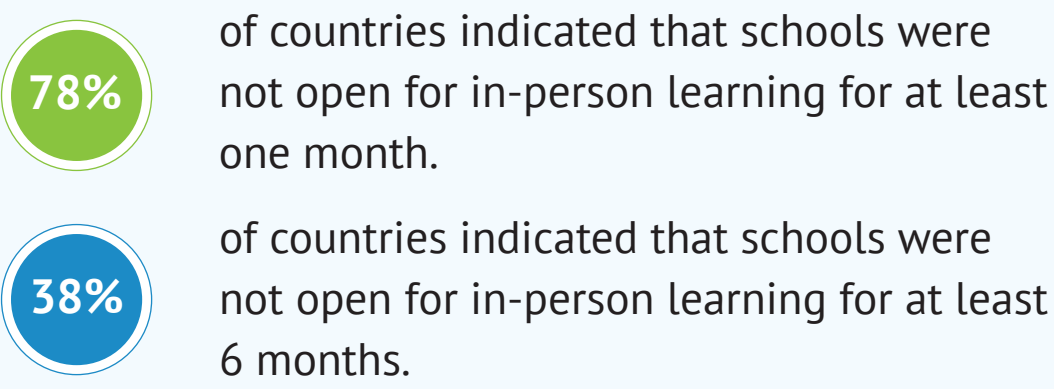
## School Meals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

School meal programs are one of the most widespread safety nets in the world, reaching an estimated **388 million** children<sup>1</sup> and operating in a greater number of countries than any other safety net program.<sup>2</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted school schedules around the world, limiting the ability of millions of children to access a daily, nutritious meal.

**The Global Survey of School Meal Programs © captured some of the impact.**

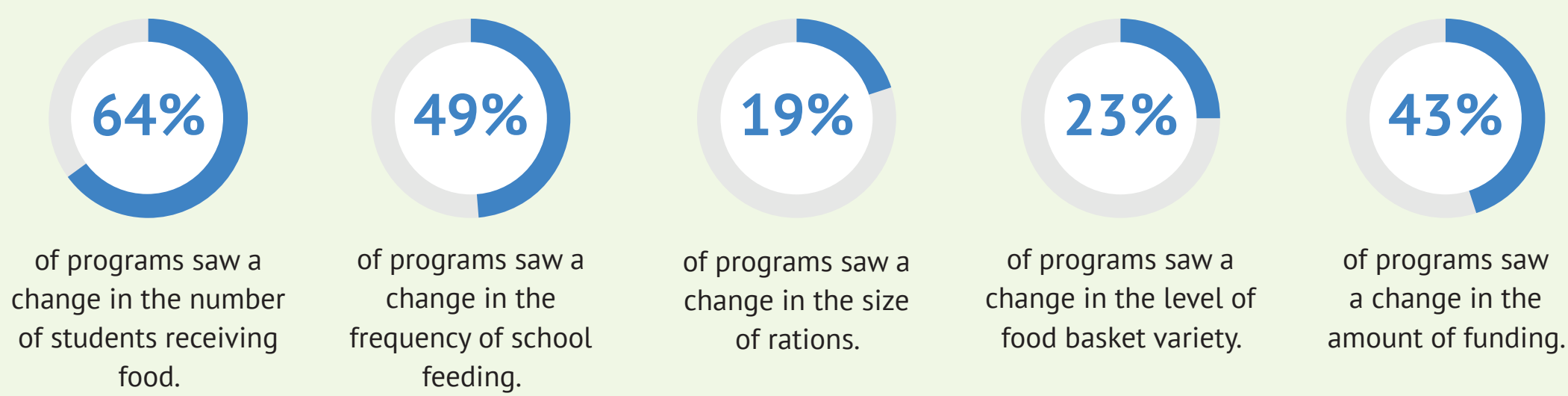
### SCHOOL CLOSURES

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

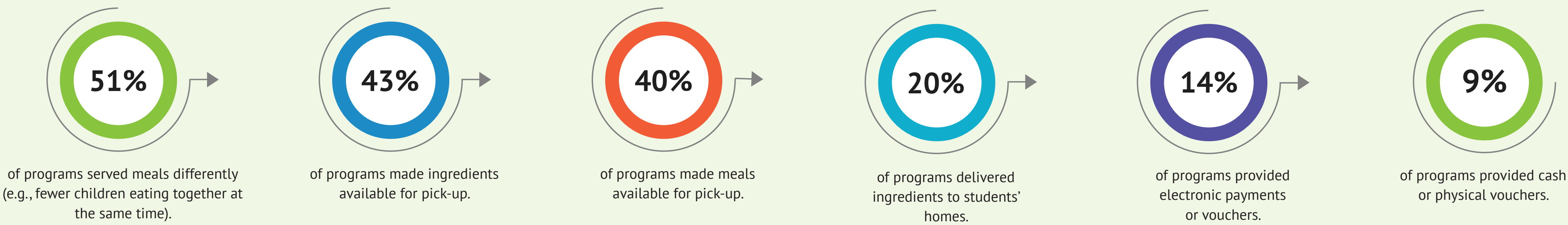


1 World Food Program (WFP). 2020. State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020. WFP: Rome.  
2 World Bank. 2018. State of Social Safety Nets 2018. World Bank: Washington, DC.

### IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS



### CHANGES IN MODALITY OR POINT OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION (among those programs that made any changes)



### OTHER EMERGENCIES

COVID-19 was not the only emergency facing countries during the school year that began in 2020; the stress of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic sometimes made it more difficult to respond effectively to other emergencies.

Almost half of the programs, or **45.90%**, reported that their country was affected by at least one other emergency in addition to COVID-19, while **16.40%** of programs reported that their country was affected by at least two other emergencies.

In the **Philippines**, efforts to respond to natural disasters were hindered by the mobility restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and by the limited financial resources available to respond to multiple emergencies at once.

**Mozambique** was similarly affected by several other emergencies (including natural disasters and conflict) that challenged emergency services and exacerbated the risks associated with COVID-19.

### EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE OUTCOMES

In **Kiribati, Malaysia and Niger**  
Water And Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) compliance in schools improved.

In **Italy**  
there is now greater consideration of funding the programs through taxation.

In **Palau**  
breakfast has been added to the Food Service Program.  
  
In **Sierra Leone**  
take-home rations were provided to households to alleviate food shortages, eliciting greater community interest in the school feeding programs.

Schools In **Namibia**  
saw the provision of more eating utensils to avoid sharing utensils, improvements in the provision of water and sanitation facilities, and a strong handwashing campaign.

In **Brazil**  
though take-home rations are not typically part of the National School Feeding Program, the relevant legislation was quickly revised at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that meals would be made available to be picked up and eaten at home while in-person classes were suspended.

In **Argentina**  
federal funding for school feeding increased, which in turn enabled the School Food Reinforcement (Refuerzo Alimentario Escolar) program to expand its reach.



### SCHOOL FEEDING: A PATH TO RECOVERY FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

School meal programs are a priority investment to help countries rebuild after emergencies. Investments in school feeding can incentivize children and adolescents to return to school after a long absence, support the development of human capital, and promote agricultural and economic growth.

